

**STATEMENT OF CICELY MULDOON, DEPUTY REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR  
PUBLIC USE, PACIFIC WEST REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE, DRUG POLICY AND HUMAN  
RESOURCES OF THE HOUSE GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE, AT AN  
OVERSIGHT HEARING ON NATIONAL PARKS IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST**

**September 12, 2005**

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your today at this oversight hearing on key issues facing the National Park Service (NPS) in the Pacific Northwest. We are pleased to have the opportunity to touch on some of our activities and issues in this region, including funding, maintenance, homeland security, partnerships, and environmental stewardship. We appreciate the continuing support of Congress for our parks and programs here in the Pacific Northwest, as well as throughout the entire National Park System.

Regional Organization

National Park units in the Pacific Northwest region of the country are part of NPS's Pacific West Region, which covers the five westernmost states (not including Alaska), Hawaii, and U.S. territories in the Pacific. This testimony will cover the park units in western Washington state and part of northwestern Oregon, which comprise our North Coast and Cascades network. This network, one of seven within the Pacific West Region, includes Olympic, North Cascades, and Mount Rainier National Parks; San Juan Island, Lewis and Clark, and Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Parks; Ross Lake and Lake Chelan National Recreation Areas (part of the North Cascades National Park Service Complex); Fort Vancouver National Historic Site; and Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve.

The organization of parks by "networks" within the Pacific West Region is an outgrowth of the Natural Resource Challenge, a major effort to improve how NPS manages the natural resources under its care. Funding for the Natural Resource Challenge has increased by 160 percent, from \$29.5 million in 2001 to \$76.6 million in 2006. Scientific information underpins the protection of natural resources. The Natural Resource Challenge provides information, expertise, and tools to help protect our natural resource heritage.

As part of this effort, parks throughout the National Park System were organized into networks to share capacity in inventorying and monitoring resources. The Pacific West Region adopted the network organization for other aspects of park management as well in order to share capacity in other venues and make the most efficient use of existing funds. Through the network system, each park works with other parks in its network to advance common goals. Each network designates a superintendent to represent the parks in the network on our regional leadership council.

Funding, Maintenance Projects, and Homeland Security

Funding for parks come from a variety of sources. For day-to-day operations and maintenance costs, we depend on annually appropriated operations and maintenance (ONPS) funding that is allocated to each park. Other ONPS funding, including cyclic maintenance (which includes cultural cyclic and exhibit funds), and repair and rehabilitation, is provided through regional

accounts. We appreciate the substantial increases in operating funds Congress provided for national parks in FY 2005 and FY 2006. For construction and major maintenance projects (projects over \$500,000), our parks benefit from appropriated construction funds, as well as funds from recreation fees and contributions from other sources.

Another important source of funding is provided through the Department of Transportation. Public Law 109-59, the Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, signed into law on August 10, 2005, would authorize \$1.050 billion in funding for park roads over Fiscal Years 2005 through 2009. This is approximately a 27 percent increase in funding over the previous transportation reauthorizations; however, it is not commensurate with the President's request and commitment to reduce the maintenance backlog in parks.

The following are snapshots of successful projects at North Cascades, Olympic and Mount Rainier that were undertaken with funds from a mix of some of these sources:

- North Cascades combined funding from user fee revenues, facility maintenance funds, and mitigation funds from Seattle City Light, the city's power utility, for a major rehabilitation project at its most popular campground at Colonial Creek. Fully accessible campsites and fishing facilities were added. Deteriorating boat docks and ramps as well as water and power lines were replaced.
- The Washington state national parks suffered substantial flood damage in 2003 damage to roads, trails, trail bridges, campgrounds, and other facilities. In North Cascades, all of these key recreational facilities and access routes have been repaired with about \$1.5 million in regional repair and rehabilitation funds, and about \$1.2 million in emergency storm damage funds. Mount Rainier's storm damage has also been repaired or replaced.
- With an investment of nearly \$5.6 million in line-item construction funding and regional repair and rehabilitation funding over three years, North Cascades has undertaken a substantial number of facility maintenance projects, ranging from rehabilitation of the Golden West Visitor Center to the replacement of dilapidated pit toilets with more environmentally friendly and visitor friendly prefabricated vault toilets.
- At North Cascades, 20 miles of boundary are shared with Canada and, despite rugged terrain, it is a porous avenue for illegal aliens and drugs crossing the border. The \$350,000 budget increase that Congress appropriated for North Cascades in FY 2004 has been used to add park rangers so that we can more actively cooperate with the Department of Homeland Security in securing our borders and protecting park visitors and resources. As part of that effort, recreation fee and facility maintenance funds are being used to design and install narrow-band radio capability for more effective communication in this mountainous park.
- At Olympic, cyclic maintenance, repair and rehabilitation, and recreation fee funding is being used for a range of improvements. We have replaced picnic tables and campfire grills, improved roads and backcountry trails, upgraded the exterior of

the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center, installed accessible restrooms, replaced roofs, and retrofitted the administrative building for seismic safety.

- Olympic received an operating budget increase of 4 percent for FY 2005, which has enabled the park to hire several seasonal employees. Olympic has improved visitor services by offering a new orientation video and wilderness trip planner and increasing the number of staff at wilderness information stations.
- In the last two years at Mount Rainier, NPS has completed four major construction projects: burying four miles of underground power line, rehabilitating the Paradise Guide House, repairing the Longmire Suspension Bridge, and replacing seasonal employee trailers with a dormitory for a total of \$9.9 million. The park has embarked on two other major, multi-year construction projects: one to rebuild the Jackson Visitor Center and rehabilitate Paradise Inn, a national historic landmark. Congress appropriated \$22.2 million in the FY 2006 Interior Appropriations Act for these two projects.
- In 2004, Congress passed legislation and approved the first \$1million toward land acquisition for a new campground and other visitor and administrative facilities in the Carbon River Valley section of Mount Rainier. These new facilities will replace similar facilities that are often inaccessible due to road washouts that are costly to repair. After these facilities are built, the park will no longer need to spend funds repairing the road as a result of the washouts.

### Management Initiatives

Along with other parks throughout the country, the parks in the Pacific Northwest have been actively involved in developments to run parks in a more business-like manner. We are focused on new ways of managing facilities in parks, and new processes for determining the most effective and efficient use of funds.

As part of our effort to improve the way we manage our assets, NPS has a new data system that is providing a more accurate estimates of maintenance needs on a weekly basis. Mount Rainier served as the pilot park for this new computer tracking system for assets. An integral part of this program is assessing conditions by quantifying deferred maintenance, documenting inspections, setting industry-standard cost estimates, and establishing business practices that measure results based on the facility condition index.

One of the most important areas in which we are pursuing more business-like practices is in our budget formulation process – the process we use to determine the most effective and efficient allocation of funds in the President’s budget and appropriated to NPS by Congress. Our tools are the park scorecard, core operations analysis, and business plans.

The scorecard is an indicator of a park’s financial, operational, and managerial health. It provides an overarching snapshot of the current situation by analyzing park needs based on broad criteria. The current version of the scorecard has over 30 separate measures identified and grouped in four

categories – financial, organizational, recreation, and resource management. The scorecard played a role in the selection of parks for the additional FY 2005 operations funding by Congress.

The core operations analysis process integrates management tools to improve park efficiency and has been used successfully in the Intermountain Region. The goals of this process are to achieve personal services and fixed costs equal to or below 80 percent of base funds, pursue efficiencies based on cost benefit analyses of alternatives, and ensure that each park's base budget relates to core operations and NPS goals and priorities. This year, the Pacific West Region is planning to look at 12 parks in the region using a core operations analysis model.

Business plans help parks focus on operations, develop cost objectives, identify revenue sources beyond appropriated funds, and plan out the highest priority projects for the next three to five years. Our business planning has evolved and improved over the past four years. Olympic and Mount Rainier have business plans which identify park activities, core needs, methods to achieve efficiencies, and strategies for meeting goals within budget. Our business plans now provide a better roadmap for effectively and efficiently addressing priorities.

### Partnerships

With so much public land managed by the U.S. Forest Service in the Pacific Northwest, the three national parks in Washington state have a long history of working cooperatively with our neighboring national forests. In many locations, our offices and visitor orientation facilities are co-located. We share resources for wildland firefighting through the interagency coordination system. We also provide assistance on the national forests for emergency law enforcement response. Just as we are finding opportunities to share resources and support among parks, we will continue to do the same with the US Forest Service and our other agency partners.

The Pacific Northwest parks are also engaged in a multitude of partnerships with other public and private entities. The newly designated Lewis and Clark National Historical Park, formerly Fort Clatsop National Memorial, is a leading example of where partnerships are bringing new resources to bear in increasing public awareness of the inspiring journey of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, as well as more effective and efficient management of the resources associated with this story.

The Federal government and the States of Washington and Oregon are sharing costs for the new park, which Congress redesignated and expanded in 2004. NPS recently completed acquiring land around Fort Clatsop and, with a recent \$1.6 million appropriation from Congress, will be acquiring the land at Dismal Nitch, one of the new Lewis and Clark National Historical Park sites on the Washington side of the Columbia River. Meanwhile, the State of Washington is investing \$5.5 million in construction of new visitor facilities and services at Station Camp, another new National Park Service site on the Washington side. It will include the realignment of Highway 101, construction of restrooms and trails, and some interpretive media on the Chinookan and Lewis and Clark story. Once completed, the state will donate these visitor facilities and services to NPS.

As directed by Congress, NPS and the States of Washington and Oregon will collaborate on sharing management resources and on interpretation at the various park sites managed by the three entities. We are looking forward to beginning this year our joint celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the pinnacle of the Lewis and Clark journey—reaching the Pacific Ocean—and to continuing to work together to engage the public in this marvelous story in the years ahead.

Washington State has been collaborating with NPS in other ways as well. The state's National Park Fund, a non-profit affiliate of the National Park Foundation, raised nearly \$340,000 in philanthropic giving on behalf of Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks last year. In its last session, the Washington State Legislature authorized the sale of a special vehicle license plate beginning in 2006. The proceeds of those sales will go directly to benefit these parks.

Seattle City Light, a municipal utility, uses glacial runoff from North Cascades to produce 25 percent of Seattle's electricity. This utility, as a condition of receiving an operating license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, spent \$10.7 million to build the park's new Environmental Learning Center, which opened in July. The North Cascades Institute, a non-profit park partner for nearly 20 years, operates and maintains this facility.

### Environmental Stewardship

Addressing threats to the natural ecosystems is one of the greatest challenges we have in our Pacific Northwest parks. It is also an area where we are beginning to see some real successes, both through efforts we have undertaken on our own and in partnership with others.

In the area of environmental restoration, Olympic National Park is the site of one of the nation's most critical projects. In a major, long-term effort, we are working to restore anadromous fish to the Elwha River through removal of two dams proposed to begin in 2008. This will be the largest dam removal effort in the nation to date, and the second largest restoration program for NPS. Following removal of these dams, salmon and steelhead that over 80 years ago were restricted to a five-mile section in the lower river will be able to utilize habitat throughout the watershed. The return of these fish will benefit not only the Elwha Tribe and local communities, but also provide nutrients to many other species in the watershed, including bears, eagles, and weasels.

We have had some real success with eradicating invasive species. Invasive species proliferation is implicated in the listing of 42 percent of all species protected by the Endangered Species Act and causes more than \$20 billion per year in economic damages across public and private land. The proliferation of noxious invasive species reduces natural diversity.

One of the features of the Natural Resource Challenge was the establishment of several exotic plant management teams to conduct eradication projects in national park units—a “strike force” approach to the decades-old problem of dealing with invasive species. The four-person team for the Pacific Northwest is led by an employee who has a Master of Science degree in Weed Science. This year the crew was supplemented with five interns from the Student Conservation Association, another important partner to NPS.

The results have been very encouraging. At North Cascades, a cooperative program involving NPS, the U.S. Forest Service, Seattle City Light, The Nature Conservancy, three county Weed Boards, and the Washington State Departments of Agriculture, Fish and Wildlife, and Natural Resources is successfully checking the spread and beginning the eradication of knotweed, a particularly troublesome invasive which, if left unchecked, can alter riparian systems and impede salmon recovery. Olympic is part of a similar multi-agency working group for the same purpose.

At Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, the team provided the impetus for the formation of a Cooperative Weed Management area partnership that includes The Nature Conservancy, Washington State Parks, Island County, and the Town of Coupeville. Their particular focus is on poison hemlock, an invasive exotic with the potential to seriously threaten public health.

At Mount Rainier, staff, with the help of conservation youth groups and volunteers, have been working for 10 years to control invasive plants along trail corridors where they tend to spread easily. Approximately 350,000 invasive plants are removed annually and research shows that in areas where plants have faithfully been controlled for several years, the invasive numbers are down significantly. In some cases, populations that originally numbered in the tens of thousands have been reduced to just a few individual plants. And, in response, native plant species have rebounded in areas formerly infested with non-native plants.

Recognizing that invasive species cross geographic and jurisdictional boundaries, these types of collaborative efforts are highly effective in managing a shared problem. To facilitate such efforts, the Administration has transmitted to Congress a draft legislative proposal entitled, "the Natural Resource Protection Cooperative Agreement Act". This proposal would provide the Secretary the authority to expend Federal funds on lands inside or outside of National Park System units through collaborative efforts with State and local entities and willing private landowners where there is a clear and direct benefit to park natural resources. Other federal land management agencies, such as the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service, already have such authority.

Another area where we are addressing threats to the environment, and saving parks money, is in energy conservation and efficiency. All units of the National Park System are working to improve their use of energy, and Mount Rainier has had some particular successes in this area. One of the most important contributions the park will make to energy conservation is in rebuilding the Jackson Visitor Center. The new structure will no longer have a huge flat roof that consumes 75,000 gallons per year of diesel fuel to melt snow, but rather will have a chalet-style roof that will reduce heating space and shed the snow load.

The park has been pursuing sustainable energy solutions in a number of other ways, including using a grant from the Department of Energy for efficient lighting retrofits. It has replaced a 35kW generator at White River Entrance with a 15kW Solar/Hybrid System, winning a 2003 Federal Energy Saver Showcase Award, and hopes to make a similar change with the 100kW generator at Sunrise. Diesel back-up generators are being replaced with efficient propane fired units for improved air quality at Paradise. This creativity is guided by a staff Energy Coordinator and Energy Efficiency team that researches purchases and practices and educates coworkers about energy-wise behavior.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my statement. We will be happy to answer any questions you or the other members may have.